

JEWELRY BOX

RELATED APPLICATIONS: The subject matter of this application is related to a design application for a Jewelry Box, U.S. Patent Application SN 29,189,142, filed August 29 2003, and incorporated herein by reference.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

A. Field of Invention

This invention pertains to a novel jewelry box, and more particularly to a box made of a combination of different colored transparent and translucent materials. The jewelry box further includes a plurality of support members adapted to hold different types of jewelry, such as a ring, a pair of earrings, or a pendant, so that the jewelry appears to be suspended or floating in the middle of the box. Each jewelry item is thus easily seen from all views while still remaining in the jewelry box.

B. Description of the Prior Art

Jewelry is frequently distributed to retailers in boxes that perform several functions. They protect the jewelry from damage during transit, they prevent theft and they provide a means of displaying the jewelry to retail customers on a counter top, in a display case, on display shelves, or in other manners customary to the trade. One traditional means of displaying jewelry is through the use of open boxes, where the top of the box has been removed and the jewelry itself can be easily detached and handled by the prospective customer. If the customer purchases the jewelry, he or she receives

a new piece in a new box, and the display jewelry is returned to the open box in its 'handled' condition. Some display cases do not contain boxes at all. Instead, the jewelry is displayed openly on hooks or is attached to a pad which is affixed to the display case. In these traditional arrangements, the display case itself is typically locked so that access to the jewelry itself is limited and does not occur without the aid of a store clerk. Again, if an item is purchased, a box is provided.

Hence, jewelry boxes must have several characteristics that enable them to perform these varied functions. First, the boxes must be strong yet small so that they do not take up too much space. Preferably, the size of the box also allows it to be carried in a pocket by a wholesale or retail vendor or the customer. Second, the boxes must be easy to open.

Preferably, the jewelry box should be attractive but in a subtle way so that it does not overshadow the jewelry itself.

Preferably, jewelry boxes must be made of inexpensive materials.

Various types of jewelry boxes and other structures for displaying jewelry are disclosed in the following patents:

3,957,157	3,532,209	5,409,105	5,547,072
4,552,264	4,461,383	4,461,383	4,739,878
1,641,861	4,664,264	3,197,166	4,646,920
5,078,264	5,913,417	6,494,316	5,377,820

However, none of these patents disclose a jewelry box that performs all the required functions satisfactorily.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Briefly, a jewelry box constructed in accordance with this invention includes a shell defining an interior space and made of a light transmissive material; an insert disposed within said space and preferably made of a material of a different color than said shell; a shelf arranged within said insert and adapted to support a jewelry article; and a cover cooperating with said shell to close said space. Preferably, the shelf and the cover are made of a clear material. The shelf includes a web extending diagonally across said inner space as said shell is viewed from a side. The cover is sized and shaped to form an interference fit with said shell and said insert.

Both the shelf and the cover are preferably made of a clear lightweight material, which may be a plastic material. As a result, the jewelry article stored in the box appears to be suspended in the box and can be seen easily and clearly through the cover. The structure of the box represents an improvement over the prior art and has many advantages. When placed on a display case or a counter top, the prospective customer can see the jewelry item immediately. No cover needs to be removed for the prospective customer to easily view the jewelry. It is also less likely that the jewelry will be physically handled since the inventive box itself allows the jewelry to be easily seen and displayed from all angles insofar as the jewelry is floating within the box. In a traditional box, the jewelry rests on a solid surface and the back of the jewelry cannot be viewed unless the jewelry is removed from the box. The inventive box thus lessens the chance that theft of the jewelry will occur. The many advantages of the inventive box will be more fully described below.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 1 shows an isometric view of a jewelry box constructed in accordance with this invention;

Fig. 2 shows an isometric exploded view of the box of Fig. 1;

Fig. 3 shows a side elevational view of the box taken along line 3-3 in Fig. 1;

Fig. 4 shows a side elevational view of the box taken along line 4-4 of Fig. 3;

Fig. 5 shows a side elevational view of an alternate embodiment of the invention;

Figs. 6A and 6B show a side and a back elevational view, respectively, of an alternate embodiment of the box;

Figs. 7A and 7B show plan and side elevational views of one embodiment of the shelf;

Figs. 7C and 7D show plan and side elevational views of one embodiment of the shelf;

Figs. 7E and 7F show plan and side elevational views of one embodiment of the shelf;

Figs. 7G and 7H show plan and side elevational views of one embodiment of the shelf;

Figs. 7I and 7J show plan and side elevational views of one embodiment of the shelf;

Figs. 7K and 7L show plan and side elevational views of one embodiment of the shelf;

Figs. 7M and 7N show plan and side elevational views of one embodiment of the shelf;

Figs. 7O and 7P show plan and side elevational views of one embodiment of the shelf; and

Figs. 7Q and 7R show plan and side elevational views of one embodiment of the shelf.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Referring now to the Figures, a jewelry box 10 constructed in accordance with this invention is shown in Fig. 1 with a generally square shape, although it may have other geometric shapes as well, including circular, rectangular shapes and shapes having more than four sides.

The box 10 consists of four members: a shell 12, an insert 14, a shelf 16 and a cover 18 (Fig. 2). The shell 12 defines an internal space for holding the insert 14, shelf 16 and a jewelry article supported by the shelf 16. Preferably the shell 12 is made of a translucent material. In one embodiment, the shell 12 has a milky or whitish appearance and is preferably made of a plastic material.

The insert 14 is nested inside shell 12 to form an enclosure for the jewelry article. Preferably, its dimensions are selected so that the insert 14 fits telescopically into the shell 12 and forms an interference fit with the inner walls of the shell 12. Alternatively, or in addition, other means are used to secure the insert 14 to shell 12,

such as an adhesive. The insert 14 is made of a material, preferably plastic. The insert 14 can be transparent or can have the same optical characteristics as the shell 12. However, preferably the insert 14 has a different color than the shell 12. For example, the insert 14 may be a light pink, yellow, green, blue, etc. This can be achieved by either making the insert 14 from a material of a different color or making the insert 14 from a clear light transmissive material and then coloring its outer surface with an appropriate translucent or transparent dye.

As seen in Fig. 2, the shelf 16 is Z-shaped and has two legs 20, 22 and an intervening web 24. The legs 20, 22 are generally parallel to each other and are spaced and sized so that the shelf 16 fits into the insert 14 as shown in Fig. 3. The shelf 16 is preferably made of a clear plastic material and is preferably slightly elastic so that it snaps into the insert 14 and is maintained therein by the interference fit between the legs 20, 22 and the sidewalls of the insert 14. In this manner, the legs 20, 22 are biased against the front and the rear walls of the enclosure formed by insert 14 and shell 12.

As depicted in Figs. 2 and 4, web 24 is adapted to support a jewelry article within the shell 12 so that the jewelry article is suspended or floats within the shell 12. For example, it may be formed with two ears 26 punched out of the web 24 with holes 28 disposed adjacent to the ears 26 (see Fig. 2). The ears 26 and the holes 28 may be used to hold a pair of earrings 30 (see Fig. 4). The shape of shelf 16 and the shape of web 24 are constructed so that the earrings dangle downwardly from ears 26 and holes 28, appearing suspended in the air. This construction allows for almost the entire jewelry article to be viewed from all angles. Other support elements may also

be provided on the web 24, suitable for supporting and suspending a respective jewelry article, such as a ring, a pendant, a watch, etc.

Finally, the cover 18 is also made of a lightweight material, preferably plastic and shaped so that it fits over the other elements of the box 10. The cover 18 can be made from the same type of material as the shell 12. As shown in Fig. 4, the sidewalls of insert 14 are slightly shorter than that of the shell 12 thereby leaving a small rim. The cover has a matching shoulder and forms an interference fit with the shell 12, as at 32 in Fig. 3. Preferably, the cover 18 is comprised of a clear material so that jewelry articles in the box 10 can be clearly seen therethrough. Cover 18 has a generally trapezoidal cross-section, as shown in Figs. 3 and 4.

The box 10 has several advantages. It forms a compact container for a jewelry article. It can be easily customized for various types of jewelry articles by simply changing the shelf 16. The insert 14 can also be changed to present a different appearance. Thus, for many jewelry articles the same box 10 may be used with a different shelf 16 and/or a different insert 14, thereby eliminating the need for designing and making a different box for every type of jewelry article.

Importantly, the combination of the translucent shell 12 and a different colored insert 14 gives the box 10 a very pleasing and unique look. However, because the cover 18 is clear, its contents are clearly visible, thereby eliminating the need to remove the cover 18 to view the jewelry article inside. This is advantageous for the display of the jewelry because the jewelry itself is protected from excessive handling, and thus it remains clean and pristine for a longer time than jewelry displayed in an open box. Moreover, the jewelry itself is more secure from theft as compared to jewelry

displayed in an open box because the latter can be easily removed and stolen. The jewelry displayed in the inventive clear box 10 looks more attractive to customers because of its pristine nature and is more likely to be chosen for purchase by the customer than jewelry displayed in the traditional box whose cover has been removed. A further advantage of the invention is that because the shelf 16, and especially its web 24, are clear, they are not readily visible from the top, and therefore, the elements of the box 10 cooperate to give the illusion that the jewelry article is floating in the box.

An alternate embodiment of the invention is shown in Fig. 5. In this embodiment, box 10A has the same basic elements as box 10. The sidewalls of the insert 14A are taller than that of the shell 12, and the cover 18A is shaped so that forms an interference fit with the insert 14A rather than shell 12.

Figs. 6A and 6B show another alternate embodiment. In this embodiment, box 10A has a cover 18A that is hingedly connected to shell 12. For this purpose, the cover is provided in the back with two downwardly extending ears 40. Each ear 40 is provided with a round aperture 42. The shell 12A is formed on its sidewalls with two depressions 44, each supporting a respective boss 46. The bosses 46 extend into the respective aperture 42 thereby capturing the cover 18A. The ears 40 and the depressions 44 cooperate to allow the cover 18A to pivot with respect to the shell between an open and closed position, the open position being shown in phantom lines in Fig. 6A. The insert 14 and the shelf 16 have been omitted from Figs. 6A and 6B for the sake of clarity.

Figs. 7A-7R show alternate embodiments of the shelf 16, showing various means for holding different types of jewelry pieces. Importantly, each shelf 16

is designed so that the particular jewelry article displayed does not lie flat on a surface but dangles, allowing the prospective customer to view the jewelry article from all angles and obviating the need for the jewelry to be handled.

In Figs. 7A and 7B, the shelf 16 is provided with two tabs 50 that are laterally and vertically offset from each other, with holes 51. This configuration allows hoop earrings up to 1½" in diameter to be suspended when shelf 16 is placed within insert 14.

In Figs. 7C and 7D, the shelf 16 is provided with a tab 52 similar to the tabs 52 of Fig. 7A, and an oval cutout 54. A tab 56 with hole 58 extends downwardly as shown. Wide hoop earrings thus float when shelf 16 is placed within insert 14.

In Figs. 7E and 7F, the shelf 16 is provided with two vertical slots 60 with a small hole 62 formed on top of the slots for the suspended display of long drop earrings, ear wires or long lever backs when shelf 16 is placed within insert 14.

In Figs. 7G and 7H, the shelf 16 is provided with a horizontal ledge 64. The ledge 64 is cut out from the web of the shelf 16 and is provided with two small holes 66 for the display of studs, posts or drops under 1½" in length and lever backs. The width of the ledge 64 can be increased, as shown in dotted lines at 70. In this later version, the ledge 64 can be provided with four holes 66 for the display of more than one set of posts, drops or lever backs. Additional holes can also be placed above the ledge 64 for the placement of studs and posts.

In Figs. 7I and 7J, shelf 16 has a horizontal ledge 68 and two adjacent rows of three small holes 70 for display of three sets of earrings, such as a combination of stud earrings and hoop earrings.

In Figs. 7K and 7L, shelf 16 is provided with a horizontal ledge 72, two sets of holes 74 for the placement of two sets of stud earrings or one set of stud earrings on the top set of holes 74 and smaller hoop earrings on the bottom set of holes 74.

In Figs. 7M and 7N, shelf 16 contains two sets of tabs 76 laterally offset from one another on the same plane, for the display of hoop earrings up to $\frac{3}{4}$ " in diameter.

In Figs. 7O and 7P, shelf 16 contains two sets of tabs 78, laterally offset from one another on the same plane, for the display of hoop earrings from 1.25 to 1.80 inches in diameter.

In Figs. 7Q and 7R, shelf 16 is provided with one set of folding hooks 80 for the display of pendants and charms.

When many boxes 10 are displayed together (either on a display case or stacked adjacent to or on top of one another), the boxes 10 and the jewelry articles within them combine to give a unique appearance of a sea of floating jewelry, enhancing the attractiveness of the display to the consumer and increasing the likelihood that the jewelry will be purchased.

The box and its components have been described as being made from a plastic material, including Lucite®. Obviously, other materials may be used, such as glass, quartz, crystal, etc., having similar optical characteristics.

The elements of the box 10 have various optical characteristics. In the present invention, the term 'transparent' refers to a material through which objects can be seen clearly; the term 'translucent' refers to a material through which light is defused

and therefore objects appear blurred. The term 'light transmissive' denotes a material that is either transparent or translucent. The term 'clear' is used to denote a colorless material.

While the invention has been described with reference to several particular embodiments, it is to be understood that these embodiments are merely illustrative of the principles of the invention. Accordingly, the embodiments described in particular should be considered as exemplary, not limiting, with respect to the following claims.